

Education Is an Investment in the Rep-Manufacturer Partnership

As a manufacturers' representative, we are tasked with the responsibility of educating our manufacturers as to what we actually do in the field. The nature of our "Partners in Profit" relationship gives us the opportunity to provide clarity, while managing the manufacturer's perceptions about what we do and how we perform in the field to achieve our mutual end goal of increasing sales and profits. Additionally, educating our manufacturers about our activities in the field will allow us to identify and further define their expectations, while targeting our efforts toward maintaining our relationship and position as valued professional business partners.

Educating our manufacturers from a rep's standpoint basically involves delivering clear, concise and consistent communication about the activities we perform, as well as the efforts we put forth in the territories we represent. Reps do not leave their manufacturers guessing about what they might be doing in the field. It has been my experience that manufacturers not only want to hear from us, but that they need to hear from us about what is going on in the territories we are assigned. The information a rep provides is not only used for company sales projections, but is also used for market analysis, applications support, product improvement, and to strategically elevate the overall customer experience.

Educating the manufacturer on what reps do for them is relative to the dynamics of the business partner relationship and should be communicated in terms which the manufacturer understands. As reps, we all have a standard sales process, but what sets us apart in our various industries is how our sales process is uniquely tailored to the way we engage prospects.



What also sets us apart are the nuances we incorporate into our sales process in order to facilitate the successful conversion of prospects into satisfied customers. Some of these relevant non-proprietary aspects of our sales process can be communicated to the manufacturer.

Simply put, we educate our manufacturers to give to them a better understanding of what it takes to sell their products and the value we add as a qualified sales resource and professional business partner. Opportunities to communicate what we do and how we perform our tasks affirm our value as experts in the field. Manufacturers' reps actively engage customers and prospects based upon their extensive knowledge and insight of the market and territory. Initiating consistent, thoughtful and transparent communication on the part of the rep also works toward developing a high level of trust between the manufacturer and the rep, further facilitating a rewarding relationship between both business partners.

Finally, educating the manufacturer demonstrates that we, as reps, are willing to invest in our business partner relationships. This promotes confidence within the manufacturer and rep relationship. Engaging in an active exchange of information and sharing innovative ideas with manufacturers strengthens our position as experts and industry professionals. The reputation we have established as industry professionals precedes us and the response the manufacturers receive from our territories should echo our work and efforts.

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